(c) what steps are being taken to bring into more good programmes on this channel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) DD-5 (Podhigai TV) is already a 24 hour channel with effect from 1.1.2000.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Prasar Bharati has intimated that steps have been taken to acquire high quality software from well known producers under commissioned and sponsored categories for scheduling on the channel. This would include two daily soaps and two mega serials on prime time between 9.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m. Plans are also afoot to showcase the entire history of Tamil literature and culture in a video album of 500 episodes, titled "OLI OVIYANGAL'.

Termination of Regional Telecast of Sponsored Programmes

1901. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prasar Bharati Corporation has taken a major policy decision terminating the regional telecast of sponsored programmes between 7.30 and 8.00 p.m. in five State Bihar, H.P., U.P., M.P. and Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether, in view of the strong protect voiced in the media against such a step, Government would reconsider their decision; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It has been intimated by Prasar Bharati that with a view to enlarge viewership and improve the quality of production and giving uniform slick look to Doordarshan programmes, the time slot from 7.30 to 8.00 p.m. has been taken for centralized programming while time slot from 8.00 to 8.30 p.m. has been given to the National news.

(c) and (d) Programme matters of Doordarshan fall within the purview of Prasar Bharati and the Government do not decide upon these. It has been intimated by Prasar Bharati that in the present competitive environment, it is necessary for Doordarshan to maintain consistently high quality of programming besides exploring revenue potential. The centralized programming for these kendras will give exposure to the local producers on the whole Hindi network. Also the time band from 5.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. is still available to these kendras for telecasting specific types of programmes produced by the local producers. In addition, talent of such producers will also be utilized in the envisaged 24 hour regional satellite service. In view of this, Prasar Bharati do not propose to reverse the decision.

FM stations in Karnataka

1902. SHRI K. C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) how many FM stations are in Karnataka;

(b) how many FM stations are proposed to be set up in Karnataka;

(c) whether Karnataka Government has requested to allot FM stations to newly formed districts; and

(d) if so, the action taken in this regard, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Presently, 7 FM Stations located at Hassan, Chitradurga, Hospet, Raichur, Mercare, Karwar and Bijapur are functioning in Karnataka.

(b) Five FM Stations with 10 FM Transmitter at Bangalore, Mysore, Mangalore and Dharwad are proposed to be set up in Karnataka. Out of these, four FM Transmitters are being set up in replacement of existing 1 KW MW Transmitters.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.